



Outlook

19  
5-17-25**[EXTERNAL]AOBA Comments in Opposition to Proposed Leaf Blower Ordinance (Item 19)****From** Scott Pedowitz <spedowitz@aoba-metro.org>**Date** Wed 5/14/2025 4:39 PM**To** Alyia Gaskins <alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov>; Sarah Bagley <sarah.bagley@alexandriava.gov>; Canek Aguirre <Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov>; John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>; Abdel Elnoubi <abdel.elnoubi@alexandriava.gov>; Jacina Greene <jacina.greene@alexandriava.gov>; Kirk McPike <kirk.mcpike@alexandriava.gov>**Cc** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>; Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>; Michael Moon <michael.moon@alexandriava.gov>; Jesse Maines <Jesse.Maines@alexandriava.gov>

1 attachment (113 KB)

AOBA Letter on Proposed Alexandria Gas Leaf Blower Ban.pdf;

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Mayor Gaskins and City Council members,

I hope this message finds you all well. Please find attached a letter from AOBA with comments in opposition to the proposed ordinance banning gas-powered leaf blowers that you will consider as Item # 19 on Saturday's agenda. In opposing the proposal, we note that the existing noise ordinance governs intrusive noises and that adopting this ordinance will force a large capital expense on Alexandria businesses at a time of considerable uncertainty due to the proposed tariffs and other impacts on our local economy. Alexandria residents may be forced to bear the costs of these outlays through their rent, which is the only source of income for housing providers to meet their expenses.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if I can be of any assistance. I extend my best wishes for a pleasant and productive meeting.

Regards,  
Scott

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May 14, 2025

The Honorable Alyia Gaskins  
Alexandria City Council  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Gaskins:

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) strongly urges the Alexandria City Council not to adopt the proposed noise ordinance amendment banning the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the City. The existing noise ordinance is sufficient to govern the appropriate times and maximum permitted sound levels for gardening equipment. Moreover, by rendering unlawful the already-purchased equipment of Alexandria's businesses and residents, adopting this proposed ordinance would force Alexandrians to undertake costly capital purchases at a time of considerable economic uncertainty and price volatility due to rapidly changing tariffs and other federal policies.

As you know, AOBA is the premier non-profit organization representing owners and managers of more than 480,000 apartment units and 157 million square feet of office space in the District, Maryland, and Virginia. Of that portfolio, more than 2.85 million square feet of office space and 30,000 multifamily residential units are located in Alexandria. Our members play a critical role in building and operating the commercial and residential buildings that will accommodate the economy and workforce of the future. As such, our member companies consider themselves part of the Alexandria community and maintain a vested stake in the city's long-term sustainability and well-being.

The City of Alexandria already has a noise ordinance to mitigate intrusive noises, and that code already regulates the use of gardening equipment. This existing code is technology-neutral, focuses on the potential nuisances, and allows individuals and businesses to comply in the manner that is most effective for them. Although the Attorney General has opined that the City Charter gives the Council the authority to enact this leaf blower ban, doing so would be tantamount to micromanaging how businesses and residents operate and their manner of compliance with the noise ordinance.

By adopting this ordinance, the City would force a large capital expense on its businesses at a time of considerable uncertainty surrounding tariffs and our local economy. The feedback from landscaping companies showed a wide range of estimated upfront costs, and we have already begun to see increases in the costs of all kinds of equipment in response to the recently announced tariffs. This ban would be an unfunded mandate on Alexandria's businesses and could potentially raise the cost of living if housing providers are forced to recoup the cost of these capital purchases, or the higher cost of landscaping services, through residents' rents, which are their only available stream of income to meet expenses.

For these reasons, we encourage the Council not to adopt the proposed ordinance, and we thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Pedowitz  
Director of Government Affairs, Virginia  
Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA)

cc: Alexandria City Council, City Manager James F. Parajon; Mike Moon and Jesse Maines, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services